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ABSTRACT

A DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) approach was used to design an appropriate graduate course using verified competencies of vocational resource teachers of handicapped students. Twelve experts participated in a 2-day workshop resulting in the identification of 53 task competencies and 8 human competencies. A survey instrument was developed from the workshop and administered to 43 vocational resource teachers. Analysis of 36 responses provided demographic data and a set of verified competencies. Specific course objectives were then developed based on these competencies which included understanding roles and responsibilities of vocational resource personnel, developing and coordinating delivery and evaluation of effective inservice programs, and evaluating the effectiveness of the vocational resource program. (CL)

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DACUM Approach to Vocational Resource Teacher Education

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DACUM Approach to Vocational Resource

Teacher Education

Legislation in vocational and special education mandate placement of handicapped and disadvantaged students in the regular vocational classroom to the greatest extent possible. In the last twelve years, not only have overall enrollments of special needs students in vocational programs doubled, but the majority of the placements (70%) were in the regular vocational classroom (National Center for Educational Statistic, 1982). Many times, success of special needs students in thes regular programs depends upon supplementary services from paraprofessionals, itinerant teachers or resource personnel.

The resource model is widely recognized in special education, particularly with the mildly handicapped student (Friend & McNutt, 1984; Hammill & Wiederholdt, 1972). Resource personnel in special education provide direct service to students and indirect service to teachers enhancing success in the regular classroom. More specifically, resource teaches offer support in assessment , consultation, instruction, inservice training, educational planning, and recordkeeping (Ronning, 1980). In addition,

Feis (1981) recommends resource teachers provide vocational related services to students and teachers in special education.

The services provided by personnel in the resource model can be effectively utilized by vocational education. In fact, a growing number of states report the use of vocational resource personnel in comprehensive high school, vocational-technical center and community college vocational programs (Dick, Flannagan, Cameron & West, 1981; Parkinson, 1980). Unfortunately, little data exist on roles of vocational resource personnel.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine and verify roles of vocational resource personnel. In addition, data on demographic information will be described. The data from this study will be utilized to design a graduate level course for vocational resource teachers.

Methodology

Developing a Curriculum Workshop

To design an appropriate course using verified competencies of vocational resource teachers, the DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) approach was utilized. According to Finch and Crunkilton (1984), the DACUM involves securing consensus of a team of experts or persons employed in the occupation being examined. Therefore, twelve experts were

identified through state and local vocational special needs supervisors. These individuals participated in a two day workshop led by a trained DACUM facilitator.

Through the DACUM workshop, the facilitator asked participants to describe their responsibilities. As responsibilities were identified, the group was asked to agree, disagree or revise the competency until a majority consensus was reached. Towards the end of the second day, participants categorized competencies into eight areas. A ninth area of human or affective competence was also identified. At the close of the DACUM workshop, 53 task competencies and 8 human competencies were compiled. The 53 categorized competencies were drafted in survey form for verification by resource teachers across the state.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed from 53 competencies identified in the DACUM workshop. These competencies were synthesized into 45 statements by clarifying language, and combining repetitious items. Items were restated in behavioral terms for the purpose of the survey. The resulting competency statements were categorized into eight areas as determined by the DACUM participants. The categories included: a) vocational assessment, b) placement of students, c) development and implementation of the IEP,

d) direct service to teachers, e) direct service to students, f) communication linkages, g) supervision of volunteers, and h) program development and improvement.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each competency statement to serving special needs students. Then, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the eight categories to their role as vocational resource teachers.

The rating scale for each competency statement and category ranged from "1" to "5". The scale "1" indicated no importance, "2" as slightly important, "3" as moderately important, "4" as very important, and "5" was added for no opinion.

In addition, seven questions concerning demographic variables were included. These variables include items such as sex, certification, degree, experience, and school setting. A final question asked whether respondents had participated in the DACUM workshop.

A pilot test of the instrument was conducted using special and vocational education teachers who had some knowledge of vocational resource teacher roles. These individuals were selected non randomly to ensure they would not participate in the actual survey. As a result, some changes in language were made on six items.

Subjects

The sample for this study was composed of 43 vocational resource teacher in the state of Virginia. These individuals were identified through state and local vocational special program supervisors, a state directory of vocational special needs personnel and contacts with local special education directors. Since only 43 individuals were identified, it was decided to use the entire available population. Additionally, twelve of the potential population had attended the DACUM workshop. These individuals were asked to respond to the survey since the competencies had been further synthesized and four months had lapsed since the DACUM workshop.

Procedures

The instrument was mailed to 43 identified vocational resource teachers accompanied by a cover letter. The cover letter described the purpose of the survey and solicited assistance in developing the graduate course for vocational resource teachers. Teachers were given three weeks to respond. Two weeks after the deadline, follow up cards were sent thanking respondents for participating and reminding others to return the survey. Finally, telephone calls were made to teachers who had not returned surveys four weeks after the deadline.

One week after the deadline 29 surveys were returned. As a result of follow up post cards and telephone calls, another seven survey were returned. Hence, 36 of 43 vocational resource teachers responded for a return rate of 84%.

Results

Respondents provided a profile of vocational resource teachers through the demographic questions in the survey. The predominant areas of certification were special education (36%) and home economics (19%). The majority of vocational resource teachers had a Master's degree or higher (64%). Most teachers reported teaching experience of 6 or more years (84%) wit half of these (42%) having 10 or more years experience. The largest percentage of vocational resource teachers (39%) reported 2-5 years experience teaching special needs students, 28% reported 6-10 years experience and only 17% reported 10 or more years experience. Finally, the majority of teachers (38%) indicated they worked in urban areas (See Table 1).

Insert Table 1 About Here

Vocational resource teachers verified that 42 of 45 individual competencies were important (3.0 or more) to serving special needs students. The highest rated competencies of 3.8 or more concerned interpreting vocational assessment results and accommodating special needs students in regular programs. More specifically, the highest rated competencies included: a) using assessment results in programming, b) interpreting assessment results, c) facilitating student enrollment, d) monitoring students' progress, and e) suggesting modifications in placement.

Insert Table 2 About Here

The lowest rated competencies (below 3.0) concerned supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals, (See table 2).

Analysis of the importance of each category to the role of the vocational resource teacher revealed ratings of 3.4 or higher in seven of eight categories. The lowest rated category was supervision of volunteers/ paraprofessionals (See Table 3).

Insert Table 3 About Here

Discussion

The results of the survey provided demographic data and a set of verified competencies. This information assisted in developing a graduate level course for vocational resource personnel that addresses essential competencies.

In examining demographic data, a number of group characteristics were considered prior to designing a program of studies. A course for vocational resource teachers will be composed of teachers certified in both vocational and special education. Many of the competencies, particularly in the highest rated categories of assessment, consulting and placement, align with existing skills of many special education certified teachers. Vocational teachers have expertise in planning and implementing appropriate vocational education programs. These were also other highly rated categories of competence. Development of a common core of competencies that capitalize on strengths and enhance communication and collaboration between vocational and special education is essential to the training program.

Most vocational resource teachers who responded to the survey were experienced teachers. This teaching experience and background working with special needs students increases credibility and communication with colleagues. Teachers

entering the program may need to develop communication skills.

Finally, the majority of responding vocational resource teachers held at least a Master's degree. A specific course for vocational resource teachers has to offer opportunities to develop advanced graduate skills. This might include research or field study.

Regarding the verification of the competencies and competency categories there are some limitations to this method. The development of competencies through the DACUM workshop were a reflection of the current practice. This approach fails to include competencies that reflect the latest trends or initiatives in the field. This results in a narrowly focused program Therefore, the verified competencies served merely as a foundation for course development.

An examination of the competencies and categories revealed the majority were highly rated. As a result, specific course objectives were developed using the verified competencies as the basis. The competencies include:

1) Understand roles and responsibilities of vocational resource personnel,

2) Describe vocational resource program models,

3) Develop and coordinate delivery and evaluation of effective inservice programs,

4) Identify resources and materials for use in inservice programming,

5) Establish communication linkages with colleagues, parents and professionals in the local community,

6) Use supplementary services through paraprofessionals, volunteers, and tutors in vocational resource programs,

7) Evaluate effectiveness of vocational resource program,

8) Monitor evaluation and placement of special needs students in regular vocational programs,

9) Assist in developing and implementing the vocational component of the IEP, and

10) Identify local and state resources to assist in special needs students' transition from school to work.

The vocational resource graduate course is currently being field tested by vocational special needs Master's

students in an off campus course. The class is composed of vocational and special education certified teachers. Evaluation of the course will be the basis for revision and improvement of the course.

Table 1

Vocational Resource Teacher Demographic Data

Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	22	33%
Female	22	61%
(No response)	2	6%
Area of certification		
Agriculture Ed.	1	3%
Business	3	8%
T & I	2	6%
Health	1	3%
Industrial Arts	3	8%
Special Ed.	13	36%
Home Ec.	7	19%
(No response)	6	17%
Highest degree obtained		
Bachelors	12	33
Master's	22	61
Doctorate	1	3
Certificate	0	0
CAGS	0	0
(No response)	1	3
Total years teaching experience		
Less than 1 year	1	3
2-5 years	4	11
6-10 years	15	42
more than 10 years	15	42
(No response)	1	3
Years teaching special needs students		
Less than 1 year	2	6
	13	

1 year	2	6
2-5 years	14	39
6-10 years	9	25
more than 10 years	6	17
(No response)	3	8

Location of school district

Rural	3	8
Urban	21	58
Combination	10	28
(No response)	2	6

Participation DACUM workshop

Attended	11	31
Did not attend	20	56
(No response)	5	13

Table 2

Importance of Competencies for Serving Special Needs Students

Competency		M	SD
1.	Implement student referral process	3.8	.47
2.	Conduct informal/formal vocational assessment	3.7	.63
3.	Interpret results of assessment to parents, teachers other concerned individuals	3.9	.48
4.	Promote use of assessment results in individual programming	3.9	.37
5.	Facilitate enrollment of special needs students in prevocational/ vocational programs	3.8	.48
6.	Monitor progress of individual students	3.8	.37
7.	Suggest modified or alternative placement as needed	3.9	.35
8.	Plan community based training program	3.3	.78
9.	Develop vocational goals and objectives	3.7	.44
10.	Assist teachers in relating vocational program competencies in individual student goals	3.6	.59
11.	Participate in the IEP process	3.4	.69
12.	Assist in modification of the IEP	3.5	.61
13.	Evaluate student progress and record	3.4	.73
14.	Identify learning character-istics of teachers	3.7	.55
15.	Suggest ongoing student evaluation techniques	3.4	.61
16.	Assist with classroom management techniques	3.4	.61
17.	Identify existing instructional resources	3.5	.65
18.	Identify potential employment opportunities	3.4	.75
19.	Suggest ways to modify instruc-tional materials and equipment	3.7	.56
20.	Modify instructional materials as needed	3.6	.59

21.	Conduct inservice needs assessment	3.3	.71
22.	Identify human and financial resources for conducting inservice	3.1	.80
23.	Evaluate effectiveness of inservice programs	3.2	.79
24.	Provide career and personal counseling	3.5	.50
25.	Teach prevocational/employ-ability skills	3.7	.57
26.	Assist students in completing assignments	3.4	.81
27.	Recommend alternative eval-uation techniques	3.5	.65
28.	Assist in job placement and monitoring	3.3	.61
29.	Refer students to appro-private local and state agencies	3.4	.73
30.	Inform vocational teachers about mainstreamed special education students enrolled in their classes	3.6	.59
31.	Ensure that vocational and special education curriculums are related	3.6	.61
32.	Serve as liaison between special and vocational educators	3.7	.56
33.	Provide input to advisory committees/councils	3.2	.78
34.	Consult with school administrators	3.3	.81
35.	Establish cooperative programs with business and industry	3.2	.84
36.	Identify need for volunteers/ paraprofessionals	2.9	.95
37.	Recruit and assist in training	2.8	.95
38.	Assist in monitoring program	2.7	.97
40.	Conduct follow up of program leaders	3.1	.98
41.	Determine effectiveness of		

	assessment/programming for special needs students	3.7	.53
42.	Conduct self evaluation of services provided	3.7	.53
43.	Examine program achievements	3.7	.49
44.	Make recommendations for program modification	3.6	.65
45.	Facilitate development of innovative programs	3.6	.69
46.	Seek out funding sources and apply for grants	2.9	.98

Table 3

Importance of Competencies for Serving Special Needs Students

Category	M	SD
I. Vocational Assessment	3.9	.373
II. Placement in Vocational Programs	3.8	.467
III. Development and Implementation of Vocational Component of IEP	3.5	.615
IV. Direct Services to Teachers	3.6	.558
V. Direct Service to Special Needs Students		
VI. Communication Linkages	3.6	.747
VII. Supervision of Volunteers	2.7	1.031
VIII. Program Development and Implementation	3.6	5.44

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